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JOURNAL  
OF A POLITICAL PRISONER.  
[Translated for the North American.]  
(CONTINUED.)

The 20th day of April is a terrible day for us. The canals of the privies is filled up, and the filth is now overflowing the wards; the stench is excessive; we anticipate putrid fevers, in consequence of the horrible state in which we are. We have to pump our water in this terrible filth. We hope the proper authorities will use all diligence to remedy such an accident.

25th April.—M. J. B. Molleur of Henryville is brought to this jail a prisoner, accused of *High Treason*. As some volunteers under the command of a man named *Forbes*, were entering his house to make him a prisoner, he got out by a window and was running towards the woods, when one of the volunteers named *Burr*, fired at him, and brought him to the ground. The ball had entered the back of the shoulder near the *omoplate*, and had come out near the *Carotid Artery*. He was taken back to his house, and the volunteers were savage enough to prevent his friends from seeing him, and to threaten with sword in hand, his frightened wife, who wished to attend upon him.

He is much indebted to Mr. MacGillivray's humanity, who had the kindness to send for a Surgeon who dressed his wound, by which means he revived a little before he was carried to jail. This humane conduct on the part of Mr. MacGillivray offended Mr. Forbes very much, and of course displeased the tender-hearted Editor of the *Herald*.

30th April.—The prisoners of the old jail are brought here and shut up with us. On their way to this place they were greeted by some kind and brave Canadians, who, in spite of bayonets, feel yet sympathy for their fellow-countrymen, who suffer captivity for the common cause of liberty. Our joy is inexpressible, yet melancholy, at seeing our old friends. But we can hardly recognize them, so much are they altered by the sufferings of their long captivity. Tears are shed by both parties, but still our courage is undaunted, and our animosity against British slavery is still the same as ever. One of the new comers is said to have written the history of his captivity. If we can judge by their miserable appearance, the recital of their sufferings must certainly excite the sympathy of the readers.

9th May.—Messrs. Gouin and Chappellaine, both of Sorel, are set at liberty, after five months and a half imprisonment. They are told by the Government Officers that the affidavits made against them are of no importance. How many others, since December last, have been liberated because the Attorney General has found that there was no accusation against them! But probably they shall be able to recover damages for false imprisonment, from those who caused them to be arrested. Not at all: an act of the immaculate and spotless Council, shields the informers, and *scoundrels* who with the view of getting rid of a private enemy or a competitor, or of gaining a few dollars offered by a tory magistrate, have sworn falsely against any one, patriot or no patriot.

Thus the corrupt edicts of Colborne were made subservient to the private interests and personal enmity of our political enemies.

10th May.—The courage with which our companions of misfortune bear their sufferings, deserves the greatest praise. This heroic courage is more remarkable with that class of prisoners who, deprived of education, have not the means of alleviating the torments of their long captivity by reading; the farmers distinguish themselves by their patience and devotedness

to their country's cause. Their crops, their cattle, their husbandry and their furniture, have all been plundered, and their houses and barns reduced to ashes. After having kept them in this loathsome jail by hundreds since last fall, and after having ruined them, and prevented them from returning to their homes to sow their farms, the government delights in keeping them in duress for the sake of reducing them to beggary! This cool and premeditated barbarity is worse than all the odious and barbarous acts committed till now by the British government.

A prisoner, (Mr. Boucher Belleville,) desirous of rendering a service to the cause of humanity, so much outraged by Sir John Colborne, framed a petition to his Excellency, in the name and in the behalf of the farmers who were detained in this jail. I herewith give the tenor of this petition.

To his Excellency Sir John Colborne, &c. &c.

May it please Your Excellency,

We the undersigned farmers, detained in the common jail of this District, under political accusations, take the liberty of remonstrating to Your Excellency:

That, of all the political prisoners, the farmers are those who suffered the most by the unfortunate events by which this country has been afflicted, because, generally speaking, they belonging to the poorer class of society; therefore the burning and plundering of their property is an injury, more to be felt by them than by any other class of society.

That your petitioners, have mostly all been in jail for four months past, and some of them a longer period; that besides the pains to which their bodies have been subjected, during such a long and rigorous confinement, they have also suffered much from pecuniary embarrassment, not being able to attend to their business, and being forced to pay with their own money for their victuals and clothes.

That all the political troubles being ended, no fears could be entertained from the return of the prisoners to their homes.

That the time for sowing being near at hand, a great number of farms will yield no crops this year for want of persons to work on them, unless we are allowed to return; which will inevitably ruin most of your petitioners, and thereby injure the community at large.

That these considerations, however important they may be, seem to be of minor consequence when we reflect upon the duty we owe to our aged parents, our wives, and our unprotected, helpless children. They need our protection and our support.

May it please Your Excellency to exempt those to whom we owe life, as well as those who stand in the same relation to us, from punishment for the political offences of their sons or their fathers, for we feel that they ought not to suffer for our political errors. If we are detained here they will be the greatest sufferers, although our sufferings are nearly insupportable.

That these considerations lead us, (and we believe it our imperative duty) to beg from Your Excellency that he might be pleased to exercise, in our behalf the noblest attribute of a man of power, namely that of doing good to those over whom he is placed, and to send us back to our families; who, although guiltless, could not but be exposed to the most extreme poverty and wretchedness if we do not return in season to sow enough & provide for them for the coming year. Many families will be thus indebted to you for the means of subsistence, and will praise your name; and who in their gratitude, which shall last as long as their lives, will not cease to join your petitioners in their ardent prayers for Your Excellency's welfare.

Montreal Jail, 7th April, 1838.

This petition was never answered. On the 15th April the following letter was addressed to the Civil Secretary by the gentleman who had framed the petition, but

this also remained unanswered.

To W. Rowan, Esquire, Civil Secretary.  
Sir,—On the 8th of this month I had the honor to address to you a letter together with a petition to the Governor. The signers of this petition wish me to enquire from you whether you have received my letter and the petition.

I have the honor to be &c. &c.

This letter also received no answer, from which we concluded that it was a decided plan with the government not to take any notice of the requisition of the prisoners. We were fully satisfied of the truth of our suspicion when sometime afterwards we learnt that Sir John, when complaints had been made against the physician of the jail, had said: "If we listen to their complaints against the physician, they will afterwards complain of the Sheriff, then of the jailer, and the turnkeys, and there will be no end to such complaints." It is the Sheriff himself who very candidly reported to us these remarks of His Excellency.

22nd May.—I learn that the corpses of two patriots, Joseph Delpé & Toussaint Lavallee, killed at the battle of St. Charles, have just been found under the ruin of a house burnt by Wetherall after the battle was over. In conformity to the Bishop's *Pastoral Letter*, the priest of the Parish refused to bury them in the burying ground. This same abominable conduct towards the remains of honorable men, has been observed towards all the other patriots who died on the battle-field at St. Charles, St. Eustache, or elsewhere. There are people who laugh at this petty vengeance of His Lordship, and see in this vile act of the Bishop but another means of court-ing power. Many seem to be disposed to acknowledge the power of the Bishop to pronounce on the right that a man who has left this unhappy and sinful world, has of expecting a happy life in the other; and so might we, if we did not see decisions absolutely in contradiction, the one with the other from different churchmen on the same topics. They cite as an example, the funeral service that the French Bishops perform yearly, with the greatest pomp, for the victims of the three days of July 1830, and they add furthermore that it was His Most Christian Majesty that was dethroned by these men for whom the Bishops now perform annual service. On the contrary in Canada, they say, that if the Canadians had it in their minds to dethrone any one, it was a heretic Queen. To this last reasoning, I answer that it is of no weight with our *holy* Bishop who is far from being a fanatic, and that he cares not for the person who occupies the throne provided it is always an absolute and despotic government. As *pious a Christian* as he is, he would willingly obey a *Mahomedan Prince*, according to the doctrines promulgated in his infamous *Pastoral Letter*. The great secret of all this is a mitre, a gilded throne and a velvet cushion. A famous casuist of this city says that the case of the French insurgents and that of the Canadian Rebels are not exactly parallel, and the reason is very obvious; the former have been successful, and we have failed; consequently they have rights in heaven that we cannot have, from the great principle acknowledged in all the human society, and which they pretend is also an abiding rule in the other world—"woe to the vanquished." At least such is the reasoning of the great theological Doctors, the Bishop of Montreal and the Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice. Such profound reasoning ought to convince every one; I therefore submit to it. But I have a question to ask to the great casuist. What became of the souls of those killed in July 1830, from the moment of their death to the moment that the tricolored flag was waving on the Vendôme column, and to the time that Charles X was obliged to leave Paris? Let theologians discuss such questions whilst we fight the battles of our country.

About the same time that a Christian burial was refused to the corpses of the unfortunate but brave patriots, a soldier who was intoxicated, drowned himself at St. Charles and was buried in the Catholic

burying ground, with all the religious solemnity of the Catholic Church. Is this not a new proof that heaven is for the *Victors*? When a new insurrection takes place in Canada, I hope that the Canadians will bear this in mind.

23rd May.—I have already said that we are not allowed to see our friends, nor even our Attorneys, though we have lawsuits pending before the Court. It is a painful sight to see mothers and wives travelling 50 or 60 miles for the mere gratification of seeing their children, or their husbands, through iron-grated windows, remaining oftentimes the whole day around the walls of the jail, and many a time without the desired effect. In such conduct nothing of a criminal character, I suppose, can be found; nevertheless they are forced to quit the ground from the harsh treatment they receive; and this very day they have confined to jail two of the friends of one of the prisoners, because they had nodded to the rebels from the street in passing by the jail. Shall it ever be known by what authority these men are incarcerated? The regulations of the jail give us the right of seeing our relations and friends twice a week. Mr. L. M. Viger and Mr. Peltier having summoned the Sheriff to allow their friends to visit them, Mr. De St. Ours took immediate pains to have that part of the regulations recalled.

29th May.—Another of those regulations gave leave to the prisoners to go into the yard of the jail. However on this day we are allowed for the first time to inhale the free air, out of our infected cells, which favor was repeatedly begged from the Sheriff. The regulation does not specify how long the prisoners can remain in the yard, but Mr. De St. Ours has ordered that it shall be from ten o'clock A.M. till noon, and from two to four o'clock P.M., i.e.—during the most excessive heat of the day. He has also ordained that no more than ten political prisoners can go at once into the yard. As we number 150 state prisoners, it may be seen how long each of us may enjoy this promenade, to inspire fresh air at noon-day in a place too where there is not a single tree to shade us. Great numbers of the prisoners have disdained to accept of this gracious offer from the Sheriff.

Nevertheless a little air and exercise must be necessary to the prisoners, as the greatest number of them are lodged in cells which differ from the dungeons only in their location. A part of this jail has been built for a penitentiary, and the cells we inhabit now, were destined to *solitary confinement*. The prisoners thus secluded, would have been well secured, and their health would not have been impaired, as their work would have employed them during the greater part of the day in the work shops, which were to be erected in the yard of the jail. But the want of air and light, and the infection that comes from the privies, the inactivity to which we are condemned, must in time destroy the health of every prisoner who has been confined in them for six months past.

It is an atrocity worthy of the dark ages, to keep shut up in such places and under such circumstances, people who are barely accused, with those who were found guilty of the most odious crimes. As long as a prisoner is only *accused* of a crime, common justice requires that he should not be treated as guilty until convicted, and consequently no punishment can be inflicted on him. If a man is found guilty of an infraction of the laws, let him be punished according to the sentence pronounced against him; but for justice and humanity's sake, if he is to be deprived of his life, let it be done speedily, and not by tormenting him most cruelly and most unmercifully, with all the agonies of a six months confinement in a loathsome and filthy dungeon, whilst a few minutes on the gibbet would answer the purpose as well as this long and painful torture. I can speak of the agonies of a six months imprisonment from experience. I would not condemn, if in my power, my most mortal enemy to such brutal treatment. There are pains in this world that

cannot be conceived unless we have experienced them. In commiseration for those miserable and unfortunate men who may after me inhabit these cells, I wish that the Governor, Sheriff, Jailer and Turnkeys should for a while inhabit them.

Those who shall have the misfortune in aftertime to share my cruel fate, will undoubtedly have no more fancy than I have, for the Attorney General and the present Sheriff. As to Mr. Wand the jailer, I believe him to be a very humane man, and that his natural kindness leads him to soften the miseries he is forced by his office to inflict upon us.

We also learn this day (29th May) that the long-expected Governor General and High Commissioner Lord Durham arrived at Quebec, the day before yesterday. Some of the friends of our party in England have written to some of the reformers here that all confidence may be placed in Lord Durham's mission. I am not so prone to give my confidence to an English Governor, sent here purposely to blind us to our Colonial interests, and to rule for the benefit of England and not at all for ours. But it is argued in Lord Durham's favor, that he is ranked amongst the Radicals in England. All that might be, but in Canada he will be a tory; the poor Canadians will not be better treated, and justice will be kept from them. He is hailed by the Canadians as the Angel of peace and the harbinger of better events for our country; before I shall believe any thing, I must, like St. Thomas, see and feel. I do not believe in British justice towards the Canadas. Time will show.

8th June.—The patriot Generals, Thellier and Southerland, Colonel Dodge and seven others, made prisoners by the British in the recent troubles in Upper Canada, arrive at this jail from whence they are to be sent to Quebec. They are all bound with very heavy and massive chains, except the two Generals and the Colonel. We need not say that the rabble of this city called *royalist* *partisans*, have insulted these generous and unfortunate men; the loyalists of Quebec will undoubtedly observe towards them the same mean and unmanly conduct. The prisoners are all American-citizens, and they are taken to Quebec because it was feared that they would be rescued from the Toronto jail by a *coup de main*. They had only ten minutes notice, before leaving this last city.

We were at first under the impression that they were all condemned to be transported, and we were lamenting to see so many brave men banished to an other hemisphere, but we very soon learnt that Gen. Thellier is the only one under sentence of death and Gen. Southerland under that of banishment. The others have not yet had their trials. We are as kind to them as our circumstances will allow, and we feel glad to see that they are full of courage and resigned to their fate.

28th June.—Some days ago, Mr. Louis Lussier, a state prisoner, having taken it into his head that he should feel happier on American soil than in this *Hotel of Death*, left here without bidding adieu to any one of us, and most probably within 18 hours after this sudden and unceremonious leave, he was on the other side of Lat. 45. The Sheriff and the Attorney General, whom he had not thought fit to let into the secret, seemed to be dissatisfied with his proceedings, for as soon as they were informed of it, they put their hands on his track, but all in vain. This elopement from jail increases the severity and close watchings of our guardians, and brings upon us increased privations. The sentries who are in the yard have received strict orders from their officers, not to let us go within 36 feet of the wall that encircles the jail yard, and not to allow more than two together. A petulant and impudent little officer named *Gore*, showed himself very active yesterday in arresting some of the friends of the prisoners who were endeavoring to have a peep at them from the street & to bow to them. In the midst of all these disgusting persecutions, we had a moment of great hilarity. It was a